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Kernan Announces Grants to Train 1,107 Workers at Six Northeastern Indiana Companies

INDIANAPOLIS — Lt. Governor Joe Kernan announced today that six northeastern Indiana companies have been awarded grants from the Indiana Department of Commerce's Skills Enhancement Fund to train 1,107 new and existing Hoosier workers.

"Continuously upgrading equipment and technology is critical to any company's ability to remain competitive," said Kernan, who leads the state's economic development efforts. "And just as critical is keeping your workforce on the cutting edge, by providing the best training possible. These businesses understand that reality, and that's why we are pleased to offer this assistance, as they grow in northeastern Indiana."

- **Bollhoff-Rivnut, Inc.**, Kendallville, has been awarded a \$23,100 grant to train 10 new and 88 incumbent employees as part of a \$1.38 million investment in building and equipment upgrades. Founded in 1877, Bollhoff is an international fastening and assembly company headquartered in Germany, with divisions in 15 countries. Bollhoff will use the grant to train employees in calipers, blueprint reading, basic computation, problem solving, team building, gauge reading, train-the-trainer and quality control procedures.
- **Busche Enterprise Division, Inc.**, Albion, received a \$96,500 grant to train 75 new and 225 existing employees in conjunction with the company's \$2 million investment in equipment upgrades. Busche began in 1997 as a computer numerically controlled (CNC) production-machining facility and today produces castings, forgings and bar stacks. Using the Commerce funding, the company will train employees in CNC machining, precision measurement, blueprint reading and quality control processes.
- **Fort Wayne Pools, Inc.**, Fort Wayne, received a \$29,725 grant to train 13 new and 135 existing associates following the company's investment of \$3.2 million to upgrade equipment. During the past 31 years, Fort Wayne Pools has become an industry leader in the manufacture of in-ground swimming pool components. Producing steel walls, coping, steps and vinyl liners, Fort Wayne Pools, Inc. has customers in nearly every state and in many countries. Training in forklift operation, welding, CAD/CAM, machine operator training, drafting and blueprint reading will be offered as a result of the Commerce grant.

- **Rieke Corp.**, Auburn, received a \$104,300 grant to train 15 new and 325 existing employees following the company's \$10.17 million investment in building improvements and equipment upgrades. Now in its 82nd year of business, Rieke provides packaging systems and container closures for global and domestic customers in the health, beauty and personal care products industries. Using the Commerce funding, employees will be trained in mold setting, injection molding, maintenance certification, lean manufacturing, Kaizen, cellular manufacturing, tool and die and quality control procedures.
- **Superior Aluminum Alloys, LLC**, New Haven, was awarded a \$35,500 grant to retrain 152 existing employees in conjunction with the company's \$5.08 million investment in equipment upgrades. Established in 1997 as one of the nation's largest privately held metals recycling companies, Superior Aluminum Alloys uses various types of recycled aluminum materials to produce high-quality alloys for use in many industries, including automobiles. Using the grant, the company will train employees in computer skills, forklift and pay loader operation, shop math, electricity, welding, process flow, inventory control, furnace cleaning, shredder training and quality control procedures.
- **Western Consolidated Technologies**, Ligonier, has been awarded a \$20,300 grant to train nine new and 60 incumbent employees following the company's \$442,000 investment in building and equipment upgrades. Founded in 1973 as a lathe-cut manufacturer, the company produces rubber products used in automotive and appliance industries as well as in the industrial engine, sweeper-belt gasket and electrical markets. Western Consolidated will use the grant to provide employee training in forklift operation, computer skills, blueprint reading, CAD/CAM, troubleshooting, metrology and other quality training.

The Commerce department awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in basic work skills and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. Companies interested in learning more about the Skills Enhancement Fund or other Commerce programs should contact their regional Commerce office at 800.463.8081, or visit the Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.

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